

## Abstract

**Background:** Spotted fever group of rickettsial infections are emerging in Sri Lanka. We describe a patient with rapidly progressing ARDS and myocarditis secondary to spotted fever caused by *Rickettsia conorii*. ARDS and myocarditis are rare complications of *Rickettsia conorii* infections and only a few cases are reported to date.

**Case presentation:** A 53 years old manual worker presented with fever for 5 days and a skin rash. He was in circulatory failure on admission and developed severe hypoxaemia with gross changes in chest radiograph by next day requiring assisted ventilation. He had myocarditis causing left ventricular failure and acute respiratory distress syndrome. He was confirmed to have spotted fever rickettsial infection with rising titre of indirect immunofluorescence antibodies to *Rickettsia conorii* and made a complete recovery with appropriate antibiotic therapy and supportive care.

**Conclusion:** Rickettsial infections can present with diverse manifestations. Even the patients with severe organ involvements such as myocarditis and ARDS can be completely cured if timely identified and treated.

**Keywords:** Spotted fever, *Rickettsia conorii*, Myocarditis, Acute respiratory distress syndrome, ARDS.